

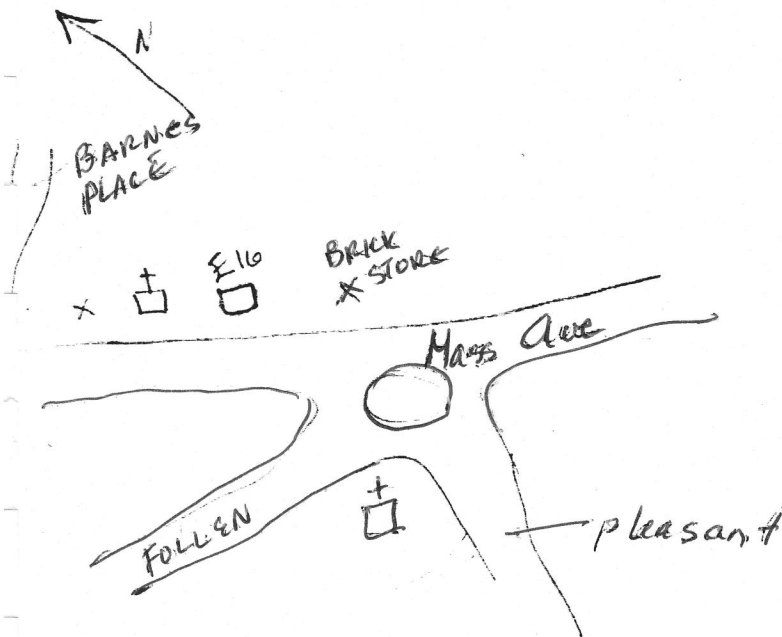
FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

OCT 75



4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE
USGS Quadrant

MHC Photo no.

In Area no.	Form no.
E	216

m Lexington
ress 735 Mass Ave.
ne Stone Building
sent use East Branch of Lexington
Library
sent owner Town of Lexington
cription:
e 1833
ource
e Greek Revival

Architect Isaac Melvin, ^{Curtis} Capell, ^{carpenter}
Exterior wall fabric clapboard

Outbuildings (describe)

Other features 5 bay wide center
entrance, 5 bay deep block;
pedimented portico across whole

Altered Date

Moved Date

5. Lot size:

One acre or less ☒ Over one acre

Approximate frontage 125'

Approximate distance of building from street

6. Recorded by Anne Grady

Organization Lex. Hist. Comm

Date 7/75 RECEIVED

(over)

MAY 14 1976

MASS. HIST. COMM.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

735 Mass. Ave.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

E

216

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Front façade gable end to street. Fluted Doric columns, elaborately carved door surround. First floor windows with framed "skirt" to give appearance of greater length, quarter round windows in gable, recessed panels in wide cornerboards, one tall chimney right, one later at rear, front line, granite foundation, brick floor to entrance portico with cement foundation.

Architect and master builder Isaac Melvin was clearly inspired by the pattern books of Asher Benjamin, specifically *The Practice of Architecture* which was published in 1833. On the Stone Building four Doric columns support a broad pediment inset with quarter circle windows which flank a smaller lunette in the peak of the gable. Contrary to Benjamin's design, the soffit is adorned with mutules. The center entrance is based on Plate XXVIII of *The Practice of Architecture*. The paneled door is flanked by two-thirds length sidelights, defined by narrow, fluted moldings. A shallow fanlight extends above the sidelights and door. The fluted pilasters flanking the door are decorated at the top with a variation on the Greek fret. The pilasters support a cap ornamented on a central panel with an anthemion. As shown in Benjamin's design, stylized honeysuckle vines fill the spandrels on either side of the fanlight.

The design of the Stone Building and its introduction of Asher Benjamin's patternbooks had a major influence on architecture of the period in Lexington. Other Asher Benjamin-inspired doorways which survive in East Lexington include 627, 715, 782, 870, 884, and 1106 Massachusetts Avenue.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Originally built by Eli Robbins to give East villagers a place to speak freely. Apparently many felt inhibited in the First Parish Meetinghouse in Lexington Green. When the Town refused to build a new meeting house in the East Village, parish split. The Christian Association, as the new society called itself, met in the Stone Building from 1834 to 1840. During these years, R.W. Emerson, Bronson Alcott, John S. Dwight and Theodore Parker among others, addressed the society. Dr. Charles Follen was called by the congregation in 1835 to preach, so it was under his auspices that the Transcendentalist ministers came to speak. He had resigned his place with the Second Church of Boston in 1832. The congregation moved to its own building, the Follen Church, designed by Charles Follen in 1840 (see Follen Church, MHC#633).

[Note: Nov. 11, 1833 the General Court of Massachusetts established equality of religious sects and ended the authority over churches, a fact clearly related to the 1833 split with the First Parish Congregation.]

Architect Isaac Melvin of Concord designed the building with a public meeting hall on the second floor and a public meeting hall on the second floor. John Colby was the contractor and Curtis Capell was the carpenter.

In 1851 the building was conveyed to Abner Stone who lived there with his family. In 1891 Eli Robbins' granddaughter, Ellen Stone, offered the town the building for \$2,000 with the stipulation that the building was to remain a meeting hall, library or similar educational use. In 1946 the building was renovated and the ell at the rear was removed. The building served as the East Lexington Branch Library until August 2007 when a water pipe burst, causing the building to be closed to the public. In 2009 plans are currently underway to utilize the building as a Lexington Heritage Center.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

735 Mass. Ave.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

E

216

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Dobbs, Judy. National Register Nomination for The Stone Building, 1975.

HKT Architects. Planning Report for the Stone Building, Prepared for the Town of Lexington, June 2008.

Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society, Vol. II, Vol. III.

Reinhardt, Elizabeth W. and Anne A. Grady. "Asher Benjamin in East Lexington, Massachusetts", *Old-Time New England*, Winter-Spring 1977.

Worthen, Edwin. *A Calendar History of Lexington*, pp. 57-59.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Lexington

Form No:

216

Property Name: 735 Massachusetts Ave.

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.



Staple to Inventory form at bottom

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

COPY

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC The Stone Building

AND/OR COMMON

The East Lexington Branch Library (Cary Memorial Library)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 735 Massachusetts Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

~~5th~~ 4

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

025

COUNTY

Middlesex

CODE

017

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Town of Lexington

STREET & NUMBER
Lexington Town Hall

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts 02173

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

South Middlesex Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

208 Cambridge Street

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge

STATE

Massachusetts 02138

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth
Historic American Buildings Survey (MASS-605)

DATE

1967 (Mass.); 1941 (HABS)

☒ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Washington, DC

CITY, TOWN

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts 02108

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

__EXCELLENT

☒GOOD

__FAIR

__DETERIORATED

__RUINS

__UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

__UNALTERED

☒ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ORIGINAL SITE

__MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Stone Building (Cary Memorial Library) faces onto Massachusetts Avenue (formerly Main Street), one of the principal roads in East Lexington. It is set back from the road approximately thirty feet and is surrounded by a circular driveway.

The Stone Building was designed in 1833 by architect Isaac Melvin of Concord and is said to be his first work. The contractor was John Colby and the carpenter was Curtis Capell. The building is an impressive example of the Greek Revival style.

The two-story structure is five bays wide and five bays deep. Its tetrastyle portico is supported by massive fluted Doric columns, and its front pediment contains two quarter-circle windows with finely wrought radiating sash. A series of guttae at the eaves adds further ornament to the pediment. The main focus of the front facade, and the highlight of the entire building, is the central entrance. The doorway is surmounted by a fanlight and flanked by sidelights. The entrance is further enhanced by Greek fretwork and other detail derived from anthemion and palmette motifs. The second-floor window above the doorway echoes the sidelights and Greek detail below. Heavy pilasters add emphasis at either corner of the front facade.

The Stone Building is sheathed with white clapboards, and the dark green shuttered windows have six over six lights. Three brick chimneys rise from the ridge roof. The exterior of the building is basically unaltered from its original appearance. Inside the downstairs floor has been adapted for library purposes, although the upstairs meeting room remains much the same as when it was used for religious and political gatherings.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

1833

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Isaac Melvin

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Stone Building is significant as one of the early centers of free-thinking and discussion for religious, philosophical and cultural groups in the East Village of Lexington. The building is also the most elaborate Greek Revival structure in East Lexington today.

In 1832 Eli Robbins, a wealthy merchant and public spirited citizen of Lexington, saw the need for a public building in the town where lectures, preaching, and other meetings could be held and particularly where freedom of speech, including the current anti-slavery point of view, might be allowed. In the spring of 1833 Robbins engaged Mr. Isaac Melvin of Concord to design a suitable building located in the "East Village" of Lexington about two miles along the main road from the Battle Green.

In the same year citizens of the East Village petitioned the Town Meeting to provide a church and a minister in their own part of town. When no help was given, they formed the "Religious Society of the East Village" and in 1835 they began meeting in the building which Eli Robbins had commissioned.

The pastor of the new religious society was the Reverend Charles Follen who had been forced to flee his native Germany because of his radical political activities. In America he became an ardent abolitionist before such views were acceptable in New England, and as a result he lost his position as professor of German at Harvard College. In order to give full expression to his religious, moral, and political opinions, Follen turned to the ministry.

After six months of preaching to the Religious Society of the East Village, Follen was called to Watertown, and he sent as his replacement Ralph Waldo Emerson who preached in the hall about two years. Emerson was succeeded by other noted men such as the Reverend John Pierpont, the Reverend Theodore Parker, and the Reverend Samuel J. May. The building was also used as a gathering place for a number of other groups. Amos Bronson Alcott held conversation meetings there, and Henry Thoreau was said to have considered it as a home for his private school.

In 1851 the building was sold to Abner Stone who lived there with his family until his death in 1872. After the death of the widow Stone, her daughter, Miss Ellen A. Stone, offered the town the large house for use as a library. As an expression of its gratitude, the town voted to call the building the "Stone Building". It has been used ever since as a library and is today the East Lexington Branch Library (Cary Memorial Library).

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Piper, Dr. Fred Smith. "Architectural Yesterdays in Lexington," Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society, Vol. IV, Lexington, Mass. 1912.
Smith, A. Bradford. "History of the Stone Building," Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society, Vol. II, Lexington, Mass. 1900.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .37

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	9	3	1	8	4	2	0	4	6	9	9	6	0	0
ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING								

B

ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING								

C

ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING								

D

ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING								

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Judy Dobbs, National Register Editor

ORGANIZATION

Massachusetts Historical Commission

STREET & NUMBER

294 Washington Street

CITY OR TOWN

Boston

DATE

November 24, 1975

TELEPHONE

617-727-8470

STATE

Massachusetts 02108

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Elizabeth Reed Amador

TITLE

Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission

DATE

Nov. 25, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER